

On Christmas Day

"In the bleak midwinter...all earth stands as iron, water like a stone." Throughout recorded history, the civilizations of the Northern climes faced the barren darkness of the winter months, sustained by their faith that the sun would return. Nearly every culture celebrated the lengthening of the days toward spring with their own version of a midwinter festival.

Many centuries later, the Christian church celebrated the birth of Christ and the return of the Light as one, a Savior who rescues us from the fear and darkness of an eternal "bleak midwinter."

While Renaissance musicians first developed the sacred musical text of Christmas, the Victorian era saw the most vigorous expansion of this holiday, drawing on European and British traditions to create a lovely and enduring canon of music that is shared across generations and cultures today.

In our area of the United States, the importance of Christmas music is illustrated by the abundance of concerts that fill nearly six weeks before the 25th of December. Now we join the procession, inspired by local artists and urged on by our audiences. These tunes are both raucous and reflective, joyous and poignant as is the holiday season itself. Listen to them with family and loved ones, break out the Holly and the Ivy, the Wooden Soldiers and, of course, the Nutcrackers. *"God and man today become / More in tune than fife and drum / So be merry while you play / Tu-re-lu-re-lu, pat-a-pat-a-pan!"*

We hope that you enjoy listening as much as we have enjoyed playing. Merry Christmas.

Jim MacConduibh, Director
Medford Massachusetts, early winter 2002



This project was a partnership between MCV and long-time friends and arrangers John Ciaglia and Jim Clark. All percussion scores were arranged by Jim Clark and all fife scores were arranged by John Ciaglia unless specifically credited to Jim Clark. The listener might happily note various inventions and extrapolations on some of these old favorites; our arrangers, in the best tradition of the canon, have had more than a little fun with them as is reflected in some of the invention titles. Quartets are credited in descending order of voice.

Our heartfelt thanks to... The MITRE Corporation for giving us a home, and especially to the MITRE security team who are so very patient with this absent-minded lot of musicians. Derk Smid for his energy and art and ideas for our publications. The officers and crew of the USS Kearsarge (LHD-3) where these liner notes were begun during a wonderful week-long 'cruise.' Richard Pasley for his beautiful photography that captures the spirit of MCV so well. Huckleberry Bennert for capturing our sound, and for tolerating loud and prolonged noises. Don Mason and Jim Clark for helping us make those loud and prolonged noises very accurately. Former MCV bass drummer Jerome Deupree for the transport and loan of his drums for this project. The 215th Army Band/Massachusetts Army National Guard & Bandmaster CWO James Girard for the loan of tympani, chimes, and concert bass drum. Janice Caponigro at Chili's Bar & Grille in Burlington, Mass., for feeding and watering the creatures of MCV so faithfully. Constance Mancevice for thinking to give us the music for March of the Kings. Joel Cohen and Anne Azema of the Boston Camerata for their recordings that were such an inspiration for this project. Cooperman Fife & Drum Company for their friendship and beautiful drums. Healy Flute Company for his wonderful fifes. Thanks to those who've encouraged us for years to tackle a Christmas recording, and to our audience at Williamsburg's Grand Illumination celebration for so warmly applauding the idea. Last, a special thanks to our friends and soulmates John Ciaglia and Jim Clark for having the vision to see what this project could be, and for the love, energy, and inspiration they poured into their music.

MCV Members 2002

Director: Jim MacConduibh

Drum Majors: Earl J. Battle, Myles McConnon.

Fifes: Kim Conley, Ann-Marie Cunniff, Karen Goddard, Heather Jordan, Paul Joseph, Betsy Ketudat, Liana Lareau, Jane Law, Sarah MacConduibh, Corinne Mancevice, Amy Pasley, William Phenix, Janis Kenderdine Rowell, Devon Schudy, Amy Smid, Steven Taskovics.

Snare Drums: Michael Cahill, James Martin Clark, Michael Godin, Rob Hutton, Paul Lusardi, Jim MacConduibh, Andrea Wirth.

Bass Drums: Jeff Donsbach, Myles McConnon, Michael Moran, Mark Strong.

Guidon: Sue Beebe

Colors: Lisa Arsenaault, Dann Berkowitz, Cindy Geldart, Doug Geldart, Lisa Sutton-Anderson.

Support Staff: Ruth Cunniff, Carrie Geldart, Barbara Godin, Michelle Godin, Mary Ross S. Hutton, Scott Hutton, Rhonda McConnon, Dan Murtagh, Seathrun O'Corrain, Janet Rotante.

Produced by Jim and Sarah MacConduibh

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- Belli Hollyday:** The Holly and the Ivy / Holly's a Smart Ilex / Ding Dong Merrily on High / Ives Swapping. The Holly and the Ivy is found in many old collections, and appears in broadsides as early as 1710. Our source, *The Oxford Book of Carols (The OBC)* (Dearmer, Williams, Shaw; Oxford University Press, 1928) suggests it was originally sung and danced simultaneously; the Holly representing the masculine elements and the Ivy the feminine elements of the story. Ding Dong Merrily on High is a traditional French melody. Holly's a Smart Ilex quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Devon Schudy, Jane Law, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- Masters in This Hall**, an old French tune first published in J.D. Sedding's *Ancient Christmas Carols*, 1860. Our arrangement of the melody is after a setting by Gustav Holst, 1924, as reprinted in *The OBC*, 1928. Hand drums, triangle: Jim Clark. Solo snare drum: Michael Godin.
- Boar's Head Carol.** According to the Steeleye Span website, "the ancient ceremony of The Boar's Head Carol was performed for many years on Christmas Eve at The Queens College, Oxford, but now on a Saturday shortly before Christmas, when old members are entertained at a 'gaudy'. The College Choir processes into the hall during the refrains, stopping each time when a verse is sung. When the boar's head is set down on the high table, the provost distributes the herbs among the choir and presents the solo singer with the orange from the boar's mouth." The original setting of this tune appears in A.H. Bullen's *Carols and Poems*, 1885.
- Lo! How a Rose E're Blooming** was composed by Michael Prätorius, 1571-1621. Other than minor editorial changes, this is the version appearing in the *Kölner Gesangbuch*, 1600. Quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Ann-Marie Cunniff, Jane Law, Amy Smid (flute).
- Three French Carols:** Noël Nouvelet / Nous Allons, Ma Mie / Promptement Levez-Vous. Noël Nouvelet is of obscure derivation. Nous Allons, Ma Mie was printed by Grimault and Roques, amongst a few. Promptement Levez-Vous is based upon the old French ritournelle "C'est de nos moutons l'allure, mon cousin." Our settings have been adapted from those in *The OBC*. Quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Heather Jordan, Jane Law, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- Carol of the Bells** is an adaptation of an ancient Ukrainian folk song called a "shchedrivka." Legend has it that when Christ was born all the bells on earth began to ring. We like to think there were drums, too. Arranged by Jim Clark. Tom-toms, chimes: Jim Clark. Triangle, cymbal: Andrea Wirth. Concert bass: Jim MacConduibh.
- Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence.** *'Let all mortal flesh keep silence / and with fear and trembling stand / ponder nothing earthly-minded / for with blessing in his hand / Christ our God to earth descendeth / our full homage to demand.'* Set to the melody of a traditional French carol Picardy, this powerful and moving hymn is based on the Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn from the Liturgy of St James (4th century), one of the earliest extant liturgies of the Christian Church, and is found in both Greek and Syriac. It is still in use among Orthodox Christians, who recite it in Jerusalem on the Sunday after Christmas. Arranged by Jim Clark. Quartet: Jane Law, Karen Goddard, Sarah MacConduibh, Amy Smid (flute). Percussion: Jim Clark.
- O Come O Come Emmanuel.** This version of the thirteenth century plainsong Veni Emmanuel was taken from the hymnal of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, 1933; Clarence Dickenson, Calvin Weiss Laufer, editors. Quartet: Jane Law, Corinne Mancevice, Karen Goddard, Amy Smid (flute).
- March of the Kings.** This arrangement perfectly fits an alternative record title gleefully suggested for this project by one of our fifers, 'Merry Merry, Scarey Scarey.' Arranged by Jim Clark. Tympani, cymbals, triangle: Andrea Wirth. Solo snare: Paul Lusardi.
- First Noel.** The melodic setting of this traditional English Carol was taken from William Sandys's *Christmas Carols*, 1833.
- Masts, Magnate, and Manger:** I Saw Three Ships / Away in a Manger / Good King Wenceslas / Intermetrical Marriage. I Saw Three Ships appears in William Sandys's collection, 1833, and is surely among the most popular of all early English Carols. Away in a Manger was composed by J.R. Murray in the latter half of the nineteenth century and has been performed and recorded in innumerable settings. Good King Wenceslas is an adaptation of the beautiful spring carol Tempus Adest Floridum. The melody for this setting is taken from *The OBC*. The little coda humorously titled Intermetrical Marriage pays tribute to Charles Ives. Here the arranger stacks the last two tunes, one upon the other. Quartet: Jane Law, Corinne Mancevice, Sarah MacConduibh, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- De Profundis:** De profundis / Il est Ne, le Divin Enfant / Good Christian Men Rejoice / Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella / Ad profundis. Often set to Psalm 129, the ancient melody De Profundis is our introduction. Il est Né, le Divin Enfant is based on the traditional melody. Good Christian Men Rejoice is set to a 14th century German melody. Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella is a seventeenth century French carol.
- Coventry Carol.** This Renaissance carol is named after the city of Coventry England where the 15th century pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors depicted King Herod's slaughter of innocent children in his search to destroy the Christ Child. The words of this carol represent the women mourning Herod's brutality. Quartet: Jane Law, Heather Jordan, Karen Goddard, Amy Smid (flute).
- Patapan.** While the melody has been attributed to Bernard de Monnoye (1641-1728), the lyrics so appropriate to our instrumentation are derived from a traditional Burgundian Christmas carol. *'Willie, bring your little drum / Robin, bring your fife and come / And be merry while you play / Tu-re-lu-re-lu, Pat-a-pat-a-pan / Come be merry while you play / Let us make our Christmas gay! / When the men of olden days / to the King of Kings gave praise / on the fife and drum did play / Tu-re-lu-re-lu, Pat-a-pat-a-pan / on the fife and drum did play / so their hearts were glad and gay! / God and man today become more in tune than fife and drum / so be merry while you play / Tu-re-lu-re-lu, Pat-a-pat-a-pan / so be merry while you play / sing and dance this Christmas day!'* Arranged by Jim Clark. Tympani, finger cymbals: Andrea Wirth.
- Old Men and Bellman:** As With Gladness Men of Old / The Bellman's Song. The first tune was written by Conrad Kocher in 1838, with the English text by William C. Dix in 1861. The Bellman's Song may be found in many of the early English broadsides, but really achieved popularity after its publication by the Rev. H.R. Bramley and Dr. Sir John Stainer in their seminal *Christmas Carols, New and Old*, 1871. It is their setting we adopt as a beginning for our arrangement.
- Goin' to Town!** O Little Town of Bethlehem / It Came Upon a Midnight Clear / Midnight Hornpipe / Boppin' Betsy. We begin with two American carols, O Little Town of Bethlehem (Lewis H. Redner, 1868) and It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Richard S. Willis, 1850), that predate the jazz age by 60 years, but the arranger couldn't resist following their harmonic lead into a barbershop quartet. Take some artifice, add whimsy, shake well and the result is Midnight Hornpipe! We return to the theme but with a 1930s flair, in Boppin' Betsy. Quartet: Paul Joseph, Sarah MacConduibh, Jane Law, William Phenix (bass fife). Jazz drums: Jerome Deupree. Upright bass: Scot Corneille.
- Hark All Ye Faithful!** Adeste Fideles / A Testy Malaise / Hark the Feral Angel's Fling! / Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Adeste Fideles is the well-known melody as it appears in J.F. Wade's *Cantus Diversi*, 1751. Our arrangement of Hark the Herald Angels Sing stays close to the original (Felix Mendelssohn, 1840) save for the addition of a descant voice during the last verse. We have some fun in the interlude between these two favorites.
- O Holy Night.** This haunting melody was composed by M. Adolphe C. Adam (1803-1856), and the words were written in 1847 by Placide Clappeau, a wine merchant and mayor of Roquemaure, France. The lyrics were subsequently translated from French to English by John S. Dwight (1812-1893). Trio: Sarah MacConduibh, Jane Law, Heather Jordan. Piano: Jim Clark.
- Greensleeves**, attributed to Henry VIII, King of England, 1491-1547. The modal ambivalence of this delightful tune indulges both Dorian and Aeolian solutions. As both proved irresistible, we offer a taste of each. Quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Steven Taskovics, Betsy Ketudat, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- Of Kings and Angels:** We Three Kings / Myrrhdering the Kings / Comminscense Time / Les anges dans nos Campagnes. We Three Kings of Orient Are was composed by John Henry Hopkins. Les anges dans nos Campagnes is an ancient French carol first printed in the English newspaper Iris on Christmas Eve, 1816.
- Riu Riu Chiu.** This rhythmically surprising 16th century Spanish work has been attributed to Mateo Flecha the Elder, 1481-1553, and our transcription is based upon a version appearing in *Villancicos de Diversos Autores*, 1556. The Boston Camerata's recording of this delightful piece inspired us to explore it for ourselves. The title 'Riu riu chiu' is meant to evoke the nightingale's call. *"A thousand singing herons / I saw passing / Flying overhead, sounding a thousand voices exulting / Glory be in the heavens, and peace on earth / For Jesus has been born."* (Thanks to Bruce Cockburn, cockburnproject.net.) Hand drums: Jim Clark. Timbale: Paul Lusardi. Concert bass: Michael Godin.
- Wexford Carol**, a traditional Irish carol based upon a version in The OBC. Quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Heather Jordan, Devon Schudy, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- O Filii et Filiae.** Composed by Volkmar Leisring ca. 1637, this lovely antiphonal piece was originally scored for mixed and men's choirs. Our transcription is based upon an earlier transcription published by the E.C. Shirmer Music Co., Boston, 1947.
- Rorate coelate de super!** "Sinners be glad, and penance do..." by William Dunbar (ca. 1460-1520), Scottish poet, diplomat, and ex-Franciscan. Palgrave described Dunbar as "The fine flower of expiring medievalism." The three verses of Rorate are set to this traditional Scottish melody in *The OBC*. Quartet: William Phenix, Corinne Mancevice, Betsy Ketudat, Paul Joseph (bass fife).
- Gaudete!** *"Gaudete, gaudete! / Christus est natus / Ex Maria virgine / Gaudete!"* The Boston Camerata's recording of this traditional sixteenth century Swedish piece was the starting point for our arrangement, and indeed the inspiration for our entire project. Sleigh bells, tympani: Andrea Wirth. Chimes, tom-toms: Jim Clark. Solo snare: Paul Lusardi. Concert bass: Jeff Donsbach.
- George and Sir John:** Fugatoboutit! / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen / Joy to the World. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen is the brilliant arrangement of Dr. Sir John Stainer, 1867, published in *Christmas Carols, New and Old*, 1871. Joy to the World! follows the original (Psalm 68, music by George Frederic Händel, 1742) save for a small diversion in the third verse. Fugatoboutit Quartet: Sarah MacConduibh, Devon Schudy, Jane Law, William Phenix (bass fife).
- Von Himmel Hoch da Komn.** This splendid and beloved German melody was sung in Leipzig as early as 1539. J.S. Bach (1685-1750) knew it well; it appears with this harmonization in his *Christmas Oratorio* (1734). Quartet: William Phenix, Liana Lareau, Devon Schudy, Amy Smid (flute).
- Silent Night**, composed by Franz Grüber, 1818. This arrangement for recorder quartet is a distillation of the many others which have come before it. Quartet: William Phenix, Jane Law, Ann-Marie Cunniff, Sarah MacConduibh.
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas:** Theme / Hornpipe / Minor (An Excess of Eggnog?) / Saltarello / Intemperate Inversion / Choral. Based on the traditional tune, these trifles came to the arranger in a single sitting, their birth eased by two good bottles of Dolcetto. The fifers had to settle for fine single malt while delivering this one!

